Memorandum on PDS

2609. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any memorandum from All India Fair Price Shop Dealers Federation Delhi, regarding Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government have taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) and (b) The Memorandum from All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation offers suggestions relating to improvement and streamlining of the PDS, which *inter alia*, include identification of beneficiaries, viability of fair price shops, sale of commodities by fair price shops and amendment to PDS (Control) Order.

(c) The reform of the PDS to improve its efficiency and effectiveness is an ongoing process. The views and suggestions received from various quarters from time to time are taken into consideration while formulating policy.

Foodgrains for Ration Card Holders

2610. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of persons below poverty line in the country at present;

(b) what is the number of ration cards issued to them in order to enable them to purchase foodgrains at low rates; and

(c) what is the quantity of foodgrains to which a person below poverty line is entitled per month?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) As per the estimate of the Planning Commission based on the survey conducted in 1999-2000 by National Sample Survey

Organisation, the number of persons living below the poverty line in the country is 2603 lakhs.

(b) 766.46 lakh Ration Cards have been issued by the State Governments/UTs to the BPL families (including Antyodaya families).

(c) Government of India has fixed a uniform scale of 35 kg. of foodgrains per family per month.

Sale of food grains at higher prices

†2611. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the matter of taking more money from consumers due to non-availability of stock of foodgrains in shops has been revealed during raids on two dozen ration shops in Delhi;

(b) if so, the action taken against these shopkeepers and whether any stern action is proposed to be taken regarding cancellation of these shopkeepers' licences; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) to (c) Inspection and checking of Fair Price Shops (FPS) is a continuous process and whenever serious violations of the terms of authorization/licences are noticed, stern action is taken. In the recent past, authorization of 10 FPS dealers have been suspended, and four licenses have been cancelled on grounds of overcharging.

Study of issues concerning consumer protection

2612. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have mooted a proposal to set up six working groups to study various issues related to consumer protection and suggest measures for dealing with them effectively;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.